

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5-14, 16, 17, 20-29, 31 and 33-44 are now pending. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks herein.

Interview Summary

The undersigned thanks Examiner Kardos for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview the week of August 10, 2009. In the interview, Examiner Kardos suggested that the substance of FIGS. 24 to 26 appeared to be particularly distinctive. Examiner Kardos also proposed amendments to the specification to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101. In an effort to quickly advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants have incorporated portions of the substance of FIG. 25 into the independent claims, without conceding the necessity for such amendments. Applicants have also amended the specification based on the Examiner's suggestions. An indication of allowance for all claims is respectfully requested.

Specification Amendments

The specification has been amended to add that "computing" may occur "using one or more computer processors." Because the amendments merely clarify that which is already implicitly disclosed by the specification, the Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 31, 33-37, and 44 are objected to because of informalities. For the reasons stated herein, this objection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 31, as previously presented, is directed to a system comprising a computer-readable storage medium. In making the instant objection, the Examiner argues that "it is not clear how a computer-readable medium constitutes a system" and that "it is not clear what differentiates claim 31 and its dependents from claim 1 and its dependents." As provided in § 2111.03 of the MPEP, the word "comprising" is inclusive or open-ended and does not exclude additional, unrecited elements. Consequently, the computer-readable medium does not itself

constitute the system, as the Examiner has suggested. Instead, the system of claim 31 comprises at least a computer-readable storage medium, and may also include additional, unrecited elements.

Claim 1 recites "a computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program" Accordingly, claim 31 differs from claim 1 in that claim 31 is directed to a system that includes at least a computer-readable storage medium, while claim 1 is directed to a computer-readable storage medium alone. Consequently, claim 31, as well as claims 33-37 and 41, which ultimately depend therefrom, are distinct from claim 1 and its dependents. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 16, 17, 20-29, and 41-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 16, as amended herein, is directed toward the statutory category of a process. More specifically, claim 16 includes the feature of storing a first workflow and a second workflow in a computer-readable storage medium, and has been amended to further include the feature of generating a first workflow view "using one or more computer processors."

Consequently, claim 16 is tied to both a computer-readable storage medium and data processing apparatus. Additionally, the Examiner states that the present claims are not tied to a particular machine because "a sheet of paper could be the claimed 'computer-readable storage medium' because it could be scanned into the computer, and thus 'accessed.'" However, the Examiner's own example ties the present claims to the use of a particular machine (i.e., a scanner).

In view of the foregoing, claim 16, as well as claims 17, 20-29, and 41-43, which ultimately depend therefrom, are tied to a statutory class. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 5-14, 16, 17, 20-29, 31, and 33-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schulz, "Architecting Cross-Organizational B2B Interactions" ("Schulz") in view Basu, "A Formal Approach to Workflow Analysis" ("Basu") and further in view of Kafeza, "View-Based Contracts in an E-Serve Cross-Organizational Workflow Environment" ("Kafeza"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed in further detail below, the combination of Schulz, Basu and Kafeza fails to disclose or render obvious the features of each of claims 1, 16, and 31.

Schulz is directed to the use of private business processes and business services. (see Schulz, Section 4.2.2). "Private business processes are kept confidential within organizations whereas one or more shared business processes interconnect them." (see Schulz, Section 4.2.2, p. 96). Figure 1 of Schulz sets forth private activity as grey circles enclosed in clouds, which are connected by a "service offer" or "service communication" to public or shared business processes. In making the instant rejection, the Examiner refers to the "service offer" or "service communication," which is represented by black shapes, as abstracted workflow views (see instant Office action, p. 7). Schulz utilizes a "service offer" or "service communication" as the bridge between the private business process and the public business process. These service offers merely communicate the output of the private business process to the public business process, and do not facilitate limited visibility of the private business process by external parties. (see Schulz, p. 96). Consequently, the "service offer" or "service communication" of Schulz are not abstracted workflow views, and do not provide external parties limited access to the private workflows by generalizing the private workflow in a way that maintains the confidentiality of certain elements of the private workflow.

In general, the business services as provided by Schulz facilitate the exchange of input and output data between the private business process and the shared business process—they do not serve as abstracted workflow views. (see Schulz, Section 4.2.1 and Section 4.2.2). For example, Section 4.6 of Schulz discusses the process of building a house. (see Schulz, Section 4.6, pp. 97-98). A customer inquiry triggers a private business process at the marketplace, which outputs a list of companies that are able to perform the customer's request. The customer has zero visibility of the marketplace's business process.

In making the instant rejection, the Examiner also states that Schulz discloses a three tier business model. (see instant Office action, p.). This is incorrect. Instead, Schulz explicitly states that it is based on a two tier business process model. (see Section 5, p. 98). Consequently, Schulz fails to disclose the use of a three tier business model.

Neither Basu nor Kafeza are asserted as disclosing, nor do either disclose the above-described features that are also deficient from Schulz. Consequently, the combination of Schulz, Basu and Kafeza fails to render obvious the features of each of claims 1, 16, and 31. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The Examiner has asserted Basu as disclosing the feature of expressing first and second virtual tasks as first and second vertices within a first and second workflow view matrix. (see instant Office action, p. 8). Applicants respectfully note that Basu fails to disclose such features.

More specifically, Basu provides information elements in a workflow as "atomic data item[s]," such as a number, character string, image, or icon. (see Basu, p. 20). These information elements are grouped together to comprise a report, which is represented as a vertex. (see Basu, p. 25). "[E]ach report is either the input or output of some task." (see Basu, p. 25), and "each task itself is represented as an edge in the metagraph." (see Basu, p. 25).

Accordingly, Basu provides reports—which represent task inputs and outputs—as vertices within a matrix. In contradistinction, claims 1, 16, and 31 utilize virtual tasks themselves as vertices within a workflow view matrix. Consequently, Basu fails to disclose or render obvious at least the feature of expressing virtual tasks as vertices within a workflow view matrix.

For at least the foregoing reasons Basu fails to cure the deficient disclosure of Schulz. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Finally, Applicants have amended each of the independent claims to express in more clear and expansive form the features that distinguish the claimed inventions over the applied references. For instance, the independent claims now recite the following features, which are not disclosed or rendered obvious by Basu, Schulz, or Kafeza:

- receiving a first user input selecting one the first plurality of actual tasks that the user intends to be maintained as private;

- when the selected actual task comprises a type split task or a type activity task, traversing the first workflow in two directions to find two type join tasks or two adjacent tasks, respectively, one task in each direction;
- identifying a respective path from the selected actual task to each of the type join tasks or the adjacent tasks;
- providing one or more of the paths as possible v-structures to the user for selection;
- receiving a second user input selecting one of the paths, the selected path including the first plurality of actual tasks

Each of these features is supported in at least FIG. 25 of the instant application, and the corresponding description in the specification, as originally filed.

In view of the foregoing, the asserted references fail to disclose or render obvious each of claims 1, 16, and 31. Consequently, each of claims 2, 5-14, 17, 20-29, and 33-44, which ultimately depend from at least one of claims 1, 16, and 31, defines over the asserted references for at least the same reasons. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

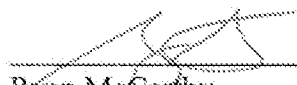
All of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reason for patentability of any or all pending claims that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to amendment. Applicants respectfully request consideration of all filed IDS' not previously considered, by initialing and returning each Form 1449.

The undersigned attorney welcomes the opportunity to further discuss by telephone any position or issue not fully addressed by the above remarks and amendments.

Applicants request a one-month extension of time. All fees are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply all charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 13909-0026001.

Respectfully submitted,

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